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ABSTRACT

This paper supports the proposed legislation, but recommends that the bill (1) assure local autonomy for the programs and exclude state departments of education or welfare from operating responsibility, (2) include additional language mandating career development as an integral part of the staffing of all programs, and (3) encourage the involvement of local youth to serve the children in the programs. The first recommendation is an outgrowth of the recognition that some state governments have, on previous occasions, blocked new programs, particularly those for the poor. Concern is expressed that state agencies might come under the sway of the state Departments of Education or Public Welfare, who are not noted for innovativeness or responsiveness to the poor. The second recommendation reflects the belief that career development programs are essential to the economic upgrading of the poor. Finally, the innovative use of Neighborhood Youth Corps youngsters in the progress of the National Commission of Resources for Youth, along with the incorporation of the "youth tutoring youth" concept in the new Career Opportunities Program, suggests the potential for productive employment of these youngsters. (MH)

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Select Subcommittee on Education
Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives
26 February 1970

It is a pleasure to testify today before this Committee. As indicated in the accompanying document, I am presently Professor of Educational Sociology at New York University and Director of the New Careers Development Center. I have had a professional concern for issues of early childhood education for more than a decade, including authorship of THE CULTURALLY DEPRIVED CHILD (1962).

I want to focus my remarks upon some specific areas of this proposed law, HR 13520. These are questions of who shall run the programs, how they shall be staffed, and the role of parents.

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Recent studies of most human service programs -- health, social services, corrections, and most of all education -- lead one to believe that nothing works. Reports such as that of the American Institute for Research at Palo Alto which found that of over 1,000 compensatory education programs studied only 23 were found to have yielded "measured educational benefits of cognitive achievement" are deeply discouraging. But that study, and the Office of Education's follow-up reports in its series, "What Works", suggest that somethings do in fact work -- 10 of the 23 programs that did show "cognitive gain" involved the use of paraprofessionals, and the greatest gains of all were made in those programs where children were involved in a teaching role, "learning through teaching." And the "Coleman Report" suggests the central importance of children having a sense of involvement in the activities of the

school. These findings have relevance, we believe, for this bill.

First, the provision of Section 3(2) providing for grants to both public and private agencies is most wise. And the further direction (Sec. 6(b)(9)(5)(ii)) for the involvement of parents "in the development, conduct, and overall direction of the program" adds further strength. However, the requirement (Sec. 6) for state commissions and state plans promotes a cautionary word regarding the impediments which many state governments have placed in the way of new programs, particularly those for the poor. Further, we are concerned that such state agencies may come under the sway either of the state Departments of Education or of Public Welfare, neither noted for either their innovativeness nor their responsiveness to the poor. The decision to seek a new agency at the national level in the Office of Child Development (Sec. 14) leads me to suggest the possibility of mandating such an agency at the local level, unfettered by ties to either state education or welfare departments.

Second, while we note with pleasure the inclusion of the requirement for the employment of paraprofessionals (Sec. 6(b)(9)(2)(i)), the absence of provision for -- indeed requirement of -- career development programs for them is a most serious shortcoming. The present Head Start program, as part of Title II of the Economic Opportunity Act, carries a mandate not only to employ the poor but also to provide training and upgrading opportunities. And in passage of the Economic Opportunity Act at the last session, Congress gave special recognition to the value and importance of career development programs.

> "Sec. 161. The Congress finds that the...'New Careers' program providing jobs for the unemployed and low-income persons leading to broader career opportunities is uniquely iffective; that, in

> addition to providing persons assisted with jobs, the key to their economic independence, this program is of advantage to the community in that it is directed at community improvement and betterment."

The experience of the new careers program, the evidence of the contribution which paraprofessionals have been shown to make to the quality and character of the service delivered, the special importance of "role models" from the community playing roles of authority and professional status, the important beginnings made in the Head Start career development program, all argue for inclusion within HR 13520 of language mandating career development as an integral part of the staffing pattern of these programs. Various statements could achieve this goal including language similar to that in the new Section 162 of the Economic Opportunity Act, the 1968 amendments to the Vocational Education Act (Title I, Part C), or in the Career Opportunities Program of the Education Professions Development Act, (Title V, Part D). Possible language which we offer for your consideration is the addition following the present Section 6(b)(9)(2)(i)

> Said employment shall provide training and education such as to offer the maximum opportunity for promotion, advancement and career development toward new career opportunities for these nonprofessionals.

Also we recommend that specific provision be made in the act for training and technical assistance to grantees, and for activities such as the Head Start Supplementary Training Program.

Third, where such programs are run in conjunction with education programs for older children, we recommend that strong encouragement be given to the involvement of these youngsters, especially those from among the poor and the under-achieving, in the operation and staffing of the programs. The innovative use of Neighborhood Youth Corps youngsters in

the programs of the National Commission on Resources for Youth, and the incorporation of the "youth tutoring youth" concept in the new Career Opportunities Program suggests the potential for productive employment of youngsters in working with and helping other children to their mutual benefit.

In summary, we have made three specific recommendations regarding HR 13520.

1) Assurance that private sponsors have the opportunity to operate programs free from state interference, and specific provision for the exclusion from operating responsibility of state departments of education or welfare.

2) Inclusion of additional language to require career development as a component of the staffing of all programs.

3) Encouragement for the involvement of youth to serve the children of this program.

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